

BATTLEFIELD INTEGRATION: WELLINGTON'S USE OF PORTUGUESE AND  
SPANISH FORCES DURING THE 1812 SALAMANCA CAMPAIGN

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by

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## ABSTRACT

BATTLEFIELD INTEGRATION: WELLINGTON'S USE OF PORTUGUESE AND SPANISH FORCES DURING THE 1812 SALAMANCA CAMPAIGN, by MAJ John B. Yorko, 69 pages.

This thesis examines how the Duke of Wellington used Portuguese and Spanish forces during his 1812 Salamanca campaign. Wellington assessed the strengths and weaknesses of his allies, and then leveraged them throughout the campaign within the constraints of dissimilar command relationships. He was able to supplement his British formations largely with Portuguese forces, as well as and prevent the numerically superior French from massing on his army through influence and interaction with Spanish forces. Scrutinizing how Wellington engaged in military actions with allies who had divergent political interests and varying degrees of military capability offers lessons in coalition warfare that are still applicable today.

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# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

As the United States continues to engage extremists and insurgents worldwide in this era of conflict, policy makers and military planners continue to encounter constraints on manpower and resources, as well as a public growing less tolerant of the costs associated with extended, large-scale applications of U.S. military force. Understanding that the U.S. cannot win the Long War alone, Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates stated as part of the 2008 National Defense Strategy that the most important military component of the struggle against violent extremists is not the fighting we do ourselves, but how well we help prepare our partners to defend and govern themselves. Given these circumstances, it is useful to examine how others have engaged in military actions with allies who had dissimilar cultures, divergent political interests, and different military capabilities.

### Primary Research Question

The Peninsular War offers one situation in history where a coalition of allies with somewhat dissimilar cultures and vastly different military capabilities fought together to defeat a common enemy. Primary responsibility for orchestrating the Allied fight against the French fell to Arthur Wellesley, who arrived in Portugal as a lieutenant general and assumed command of the British forces in April 1809. He was created Viscount of Talavera following his victory there in August 1809, and was created Duke of Wellington in May 1814. Hereafter he will be referred to simply as Wellington. This thesis will examine how Wellington used Portuguese and Spanish forces during his 1812 campaign.

Subordinate to this question, this thesis will examine the differing attitudes each side held toward one another and how Wellington overcame the resulting frictions. This work will also examine the disparate military capabilities of each force and how they affected Wellington's tactical and operational decision-making about their employment throughout the 1812 campaign.

Early in the Peninsular War, the Spanish Army had raised British hopes by fighting off initial French attempts to take Zaragoza and Gerona, both of which subsequently fell after long sieges. The Spaniards also achieved an early victory over the French at the battle of Baylen in July 1808. Britain, and specifically Wellington, was optimistic about the Spain's initial struggle against the French, as he wrote, "nothing can offer a more glorious prospect than the apparent state of the public mind in Spain."<sup>1</sup> The initial public exuberance throughout Britain at the prospect of finding a new powerful ally in Iberia set expectations unrealistically high for a Spanish Army. Recent successes notwithstanding, the Spanish were ill-trained, ill-equipped, and often poorly led by officers who had failed to realize the importance of combined arms.<sup>2</sup> The inflated perceptions in Britain were in partially the result of early reports from Iberia which were not entirely accurate. One letter forwarded to Wellington read:

Officers who have been sent out here . . . to give information to our government have deceived it, for they have begun by deceiving themselves. They have taken rank and sometimes pay in the Spanish army, and instead of being judges . . . they have become parties, and seeing everything through the medium of their own interests and passions, they have reported to their government what they wished, not what they knew.<sup>3</sup>

Despite an abundance of fighting spirit, the quality of the Spanish rank-and-file soldiers was low. To make matters worse, the number of cadres had fallen just before the war, leaving Spain to rely heavily on new and untrained soldiers. Rather than finding

consistency in those early successes, more weaknesses began to show with every engagement throughout the 1810 and 1811. As one British officer observed:

The Spanish cavalry would be put to flight with monotonous regularity, thereby opening the way for a torrent of French horsemen to burst upon the flanks and rear of the unfortunate infantry. Not having time to form a square, they could only flee for their lives and would be ridden down or captured in their thousands.<sup>4</sup>

If misplaced enthusiasm in Britain led to an initial overestimation of Spanish capabilities, the Spanish people were a bit more grounded in how they viewed their army. Spanish civilians had little faith in the regular army's leadership when the war began, and as conditions turned revolutionary, many made it clear that they opposed the military's existing hierarchy altogether. Not surprisingly, many Spanish officers offered their services to the French out of fear of the radical philosophy unleashed by the Spanish insurgency. Most Spanish officers, however, found that the explosion of anti-French sentiment was too powerful, and personally dangerous, to resist. Therefore, they had no real choice except to join the war effort against Napoleon, hoping they might thereby at least control or channel some of the violent sentiment let loose around them. In addition to the revolution, they feared a non-professional army of untrained masses that lacked the skills necessary to wage war successfully.<sup>5</sup>

For all that was written and said before the arrival of the British, the sour relationship that developed leaves one to wonder how the two sides remained allied at all. German Commissary Augustus Schaumann characterized the relationship this way:

The people have the effrontery to look upon the English troops as exotic animals, who have come to engage in a private fight with the French, and now they are here all that the fine Spanish gentlemen have to do is look down with their hands in their pockets. They do not regard us in the last as allies . . . they simply regard us as heretics . . . Poor general Moore is in a parlous [sic] plight and the more one sees of the Spaniards the more discouraged one gets. Everything that has been blatantly trumpeted in the papers about their enthusiasm, their great armies and

the stampede to join them, and their spirit of self-sacrifice is simply lies. It often looks as if Spain were not even willing to defend herself . . . Is this the daring patriotic race about which the press has raved about so bombastically? It seems to me as if the people . . . loathe us as much as they do the French, and would gladly be free of us both.<sup>6</sup>

Public sentiment aside, neither Napoleon nor Wellington could simply ignore the Spanish Army, even if its role in the war was to be largely overshadowed by the Anglo-Portuguese forces and guerillas. Among the motivating factors that kept Spanish soldiers fighting was the same rabid dislike for the French exhibited by Spanish civilians; furthermore, if their army was ever incorporated into the *Grand Armee*, Spanish soldiers could expect to be deployed far from home in Eastern Europe or even Russia. Many line soldiers showed great loyalty to the still popular King Ferdinand VII, and junior officers hoped the war would bring a chance for promotion.<sup>7</sup> For all its flaws, the sheer size of the Spanish Army could not be overlooked. At the outset of the conflict it numbered over 100,000 men, swelling to over 160,000 by early 1812. This made the Spanish Army larger than the Portuguese and British forces combined.<sup>8</sup>

While Spain was a questionable ally, the Portuguese proved to be Wellington's better ally on the Peninsula, and the real enabler behind British plans in Iberia. Though she was small, weak, and deprived of her political elite which had mostly fled into exile with the royal family in the fall of 1807, Portugal had been conditioned by a long tradition of friendship with Great Britain. Portugal quickly allowed herself to be transformed into a British protectorate. Her army was placed under the command of Sir William Beresford, the British ambassador and a member of the Council of Regency. The Portuguese people loyally cooperated in the measures considered necessary for the defense of the homeland, even when these amounted to the imposition of scorched-earth

tactics. Although friction was never entirely absent, the Anglo-Portuguese alliance proved a resounding success compared to the Anglo-Spanish alliance, which was constantly disrupted not only by the course of the war, but also by major diplomatic and cultural differences.<sup>9</sup>

Unfortunately for Wellington, the French had disbanded the Portuguese army during their invasion and subsequent occupation in 1807-1808. Most of Portugal's professional officers had been drafted into French service as part of the new Portuguese Legion. As resistance grew, many soldiers deserted and units of the old Portuguese army attempted to re-muster. After Beresford's appointment as commander, the army was fully reformed under its old regimental structure; however almost every other aspect of the army was completely overhauled. Beresford set about organizing, training, and inspiring the Portuguese in the same manner he would his own British soldiers. The end result was that the Portuguese army was able to fight alongside the British army with distinction.<sup>10</sup> Of particular note, British officers were transferred into most Portuguese units, allowing Beresford shortly thereafter to put Portuguese troops into British formations--which made them much more responsive than to British operational needs than the Spanish. Furthermore, the Portuguese soldiers generally proved to be more disciplined and proficient soldiers than their Spanish counterparts. Unlike the highly decentralized bands of Spanish guerillas and militia over whom no one exercised much authority, the Portuguese *Ordenanza* grew in strength and organization and assumed the role of a "home guard" capable of relieving the army of many static duties.<sup>11</sup>

Amongst British officers, affairs with respect to the Portuguese service were not without complications. The question of rank between English and British/Portuguese

officers was a delicate one that arose from giving those who went into the Portuguese service a step upward in rank. This was done to encourage officers into Portuguese service, but was a source of frequent animosity as there were no formal guidelines as to whether a British captain should defer to a Portuguese major who may have been his junior in the British Army. Wellington saw little reason to concern himself with such details considering the myriad of operational and tactical challenges he was already contending with. Jealousy over the increased pay those in the Portuguese service were receiving and speculation about what rank they would hold when they returned to the British Army fueled bickering throughout the duration of the war.<sup>12</sup>

At the soldier level, relationships on the Peninsula took on some unique if not strange dynamics. As one author notes:

Relations between British and French soldiers in the Peninsula were remarkably friendly, with much mutual admiration, fraternization between the outposts and other gallant gestures. But this spirit extended only partially to the Portuguese soldiers under Wellington's command, and scarcely if at all to the Spanish forces. At the bottom, the goodwill rested on a sense of reciprocity as each army gradually learnt to trust one another: they were professional soldiers fighting in a cause which did not arouse their deepest passions, and could take a detached, admiring view of their opponents. The Spanish and Portuguese had a much greater personal stake in the war--many had private horrors to avenge--while they were not always well disciplined. But these are generalizations: soldiers of any nationality were likely to be ill-treated and even murdered when first taken prisoner, just as soldiers of all armies left the ranks during and after a battle to plunder the fallen.<sup>13</sup>

By the end of 1811 the Peninsular War had gone on for three and a half years, with no end in sight. Napoleon's aggressive campaign in late 1808 drove the Spanish armies from the Ebro in disarray and led to the capture of Madrid, but never completely broke the Spanish will to resist. The war continued tying up more than 300,000 French troops on the Iberian Peninsula. Unlike central Europe, subdued provinces required large

permanent garrisons to prevent resulting insurrections, while in more remote unoccupied regions, the Allies continued to raise new armies to oppose the French. The continued presence of French armies in Spain gave constant incitement to the resistance as the occupiers attempted to live off the land and from time to time committed punitive atrocities.<sup>14</sup> Wellington meanwhile evicted the French from northern Portugal and established his base of operations at Lisbon. The defensive lines of Torres Vedras built the previous year gave Wellington a solid foothold in Portugal. If he could seize the key cities of Ciudad Rodrigo and Badajoz, he would gain control of both the northern and southern corridors into Spain.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Charles Esdaile, *The Duke of Wellington and the Command of the Spanish Army, 1812-1814* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1990), 2.

<sup>2</sup>Wayne H. Bowen and Jose E. Alvarez, *A Military History of Modern Spain: from the Napoleonic Era to the International War on Terror* (Westport, CT: Praeger Security International, 2007) 1.

<sup>3</sup>Bowen and Alvarez, 2.

<sup>4</sup>Charles Esdaile, *The Spanish Army in the Peninsular War* (New York: Manchester University Press, 1988), 121.

<sup>5</sup>Esdaile, *The Duke of Wellington*, 85-90.

<sup>6</sup>August Schaumann, *On the Road with Wellington: The Diary of a War Commissary in the Peninsular Campaigns* (London: William Heinemann, 1925), 79-80.

<sup>7</sup>Bowen and Alvarez, 18.

<sup>8</sup>David Gates, *The Spanish Ulcer* (Cambridge: Da Capo, 1986), 34.

<sup>9</sup>Esdaile, *The Duke of Wellington*, 2-3.

<sup>10</sup>Philip Haythornthwaite, *The Peninsular War, The Complete Companion to the Iberian Campaigns 1807-1814* (London: Brassey's, 2004), 170.

<sup>11</sup>Julian Paget, *Wellington's Peninsular War* (London: Leo Cooper, 1996), 31.

<sup>12</sup>Julian Rathbone, *Wellington's War: His Peninsular Dispatches* (London: Penguin Group, 1984), 52.

<sup>13</sup>Rory Muir, *Salamanca 1812* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), 170-171.

<sup>14</sup>*Ibid.*, 1-2.

<sup>15</sup>Ian Beckett and David Chandler, *The Oxford History of the British Army*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 159.

## CHAPTER 2

### THE SIEGES OF CIUDAD RODRIGO AND BADAJOZ

As 1811 came to a close, conditions on the Peninsula finally favored offensive operations for the Allies. Wellington had hoped to go on the offensive for quite some time, but French forces in the region had been too strong: —Even if an opportunity had been offered . . . for an undertaking of anything on this side, the unfortunate state of . . . [our] army would have prevented it.”<sup>1</sup> While the bulk of his army recuperated from recent action against the French, Wellington began preparations for a campaign that would secure the two strategic corridors into the heart of the peninsula.

Ciudad Rodrigo was a fortified city measuring approximately seven hundred yards by five hundred yards. The Agueda River lay just south of the city, while two low ridges known as the Greater Teson and the Lesser Teson were seven hundred and two hundred yards respectively from the city walls. The Greater Teson rose about fifteen feet above the French ramparts, and was defended by the Reynaud Redoubt.<sup>2</sup>

Wellington arranged for Julian Sanchez and his Spanish Guerillas to invest the city while his Anglo-Portuguese force consisting of seven divisions moved across the Portuguese frontier.<sup>3</sup> Sanchez’s cavalry effectively isolated the city, restricting the French garrison’s ability to conduct patrols, send or receive dispatches, or conduct routine logistics operations. This left the French generally blind to the Allied advance, unable to adequately prepare for the siege, or request reinforcements in time to affect the impending battle. Allied forces moved into positions around the city on 7 January. On the following night, three hundred men of the Light Division seized the Reynaud Redoubt, allowing allied troops to begin digging trenches the following day. On 14

January the British 40th Foot seized the Convent of San Francisco at the eastern edge of Little Teson. Later that day, the French responded when a force of five hundred men launched a raid against the Allied works, causing extensive damage and seizing valuable tools. Nevertheless, the Allied digging efforts resumed, and on 19 January Wellington gave the order to storm the city.<sup>4</sup>

The French garrison in Ciudad Rodrigo numbered less than 2,000 soldiers, and the Allied intent was to use superior numbers to attack from several directions. Wellington's army consisted of the British Third Division made up of Major General Harry MacKinnon's and Colonel John Campbell's brigades, and the Light Division including Major General J. Ormsby Vandeleur's and Colonel Andrew Barnard's brigades, each of which employed Portuguese battalions in their formations (the 1st and 3rd *Caçadores* respectively). Major General Denis Pack's Portuguese brigade was made up of the 1st and 16th Line, while Major General Manley Power's Portuguese brigade included the 9th and 21st Line.<sup>5</sup>

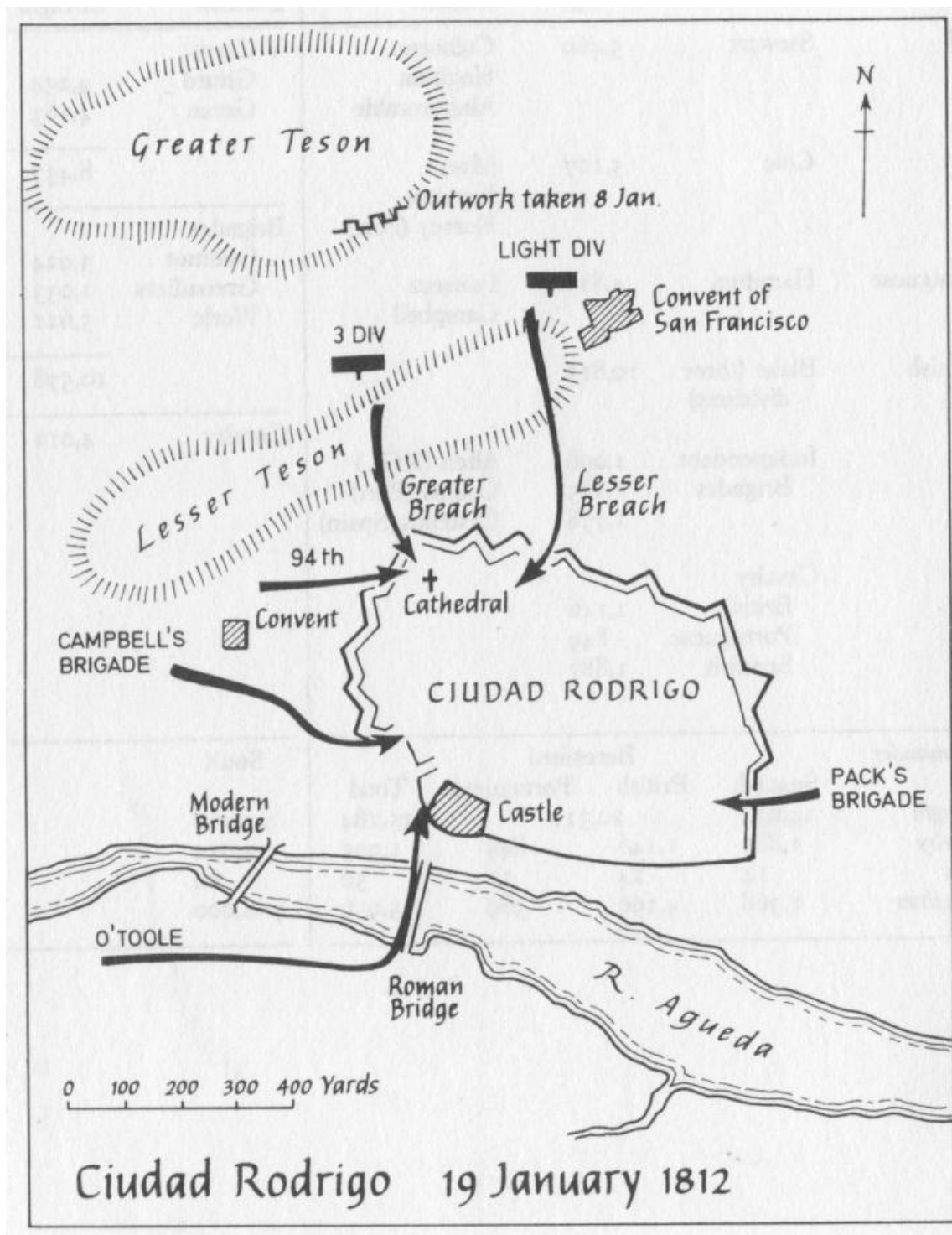


Figure 1. Ciudad Rodrigo

Source: Julian Paget, *Wellington's Peninsular War* (London: Leo Cooper, 1996), 142.

Wellington initially assessed that it would take twenty-four days to reduce Ciudad Rodrigo's defenses for an assault. However, when he received reports that a French force under Marshal Auguste Marmont, Duke of Ragusa, was moving from the north toward Salamanca, he decided there was no time for the reduction of the city by the usual siege processes. He would have to attack as soon as a tolerably practicable breach was formed."<sup>6</sup> His plan was for the Third Division to advance from behind the Greater Teson at seven o'clock, and attack the great breach at the northwest corner of the ramparts. Simultaneously, the Light Division would advance from the Convent of San Francisco and attack the lesser breach to the southeast. These movements would be preceded by a series of diversions. In the first, the 2nd *Caçadores* and the light company of the 83rd Foot were to attack from the south across the Roman Bridge; the second diversion involved Campbell's brigade of the Third Division advancing on the city from the Convent of Santa Cruz on west side. A final diversion consisted of Pack's Portuguese brigade which would attack from the east at the same time as the main assault.<sup>7</sup>

The Third Division's forlorn hope met with fierce resistance, and many were killed when the French detonated a large mine beneath the walls. Nevertheless, the following units of the Third Division were able to force their way through the breach. To the southeast, the Light Division successfully penetrated the city's defenses, as did Pack's Portuguese brigade. Roughly thirty minutes after the attack began, the French garrison surrendered. Allied casualties numbered around five hundred during the assault, plus some six hundred killed during the ten-day siege. The French lost 530 and the rest of the garrison taken prisoner.<sup>8</sup>

Portuguese soldiers fought alongside the British with distinction throughout the battle. In the inclement weather during the siege, there were several reports of Portuguese sentries found dead at their posts from cold and exhaustion.<sup>9</sup> With respect to the siege artillery employed by the Allies, nearly three hundred of the 430 gunners were Portuguese.<sup>10</sup> Companies of the 1st and 3rd *Caçadores* formed a significant portion of the force that seized the Reynaud Redoubt.<sup>11</sup> During the assault, the men of the 3rd *Caçadores* carried hay bales for the Light Division so as to “soften the leap” into the ditches. The diversions by Pack’s brigade and the 2nd *Caçadores* carried ladders and were authorized to attempt an actual assault if practicable; both forces did so successfully.<sup>12</sup> Finally, Power’s Portuguese brigade formed the division reserve.<sup>13</sup>

By this time, the practice of integrating Portuguese forces into British formations was yielding positive results. Wellington and his officers seemed to show little hesitation in employing the Portuguese in key roles even if they were not always given full credit for their efforts. As Sir Charles Oman points out, some British officers often omitted any mention of the Portuguese in their reports.<sup>14</sup> Oman goes as far to say:

The efforts made by the Portuguese government were invaluable. Wellington could not have held his ground, much less have undertaken the offensive campaign of 1812, without aid of the trusty auxiliaries that swelled his divisions to normal size. Without their Portuguese brigades most of them would have been mere skeletons of three thousand to four thousand men . . . In addition to the regular army it must be remembered that he had to manage a militia of which as many as fifty-two thousand were under arms at one time or another in 1812.<sup>15</sup>

Employment or even coordination with Spanish forces at this point was a different matter. The relationship between the two nations simply did not carry the same dynamic; and the fact that the Spanish army’s operational and logistical problems were exponentially greater than those of the Portuguese did not help matters. The role of the

Spanish regulars at Ciudad Rodrigo was limited to providing a garrison under the command of General Carlos de España as Wellington turned his attention to Badajoz.<sup>16</sup> One report stated that Wellington's lack of faith in the Spanish garrison would cause him to press his attack on Badajoz, in order to return to Ciudad Rodrigo before the Spanish lost it to the French.<sup>17</sup> As for the Spanish guerillas, Wellington's use of Julian Sanchez to invest Ciudad Rodrigo was more a function of the availability and position of his forces than any acknowledgement of confidence or capability.

The guerillas however must be given credit for the considerable difficulty the French had in communicating or reacting to the events surrounding the action at Ciudad Rodrigo. Sanchez's guerillas had such a tight hold on the road to Salamanca that the French had to go to great lengths, utilizing a Spanish emissary in disguise to get word to Salamanca more than five days after the siege began. It took another twelve days for news of the siege to reach Madrid. In both cases, communications were too disrupted for the French to react in any effective manner. In Oman's words, —Tuly, thanks to the guerilleros, the 'fog of war' was lying heavily round the [French].”<sup>18</sup>

Following his success at Ciudad Rodrigo, Wellington understood that the French were still not in a position to mount a serious offensive against him. He was now anxious to take Badajoz, thus securing both gateways into Spain. In late January, preparations for another siege were begun, and by March the Allies had assembled 60,000 troops--eight divisions and four separate brigades.<sup>19</sup>

Badajoz sat on the south bank of the Guadiana River. The French seized the city in March 1811, and the Allies had tried twice unsuccessfully to recapture the city. The city was surrounded by a series of forts and fortified positions including San Cristobal on the

north side of the river, Fort Pardeleras to the south, and Fort Picurina to the southeast. The city's castle was located on the northern edge overlooking the river. The western rim of the city had been heavily mined, and to the east, the Rivallas brook was largely impassable. Despite Badajoz's formidable defenses, Wellington arrived with a large well equipped force and invested the city on 16 March. To protect his siege force against French attack, he sent 14,000 troops to protect his northern flank, and another 19,000 to the south, leaving a force of 27,000 with which to conduct the siege. The Allies built a pontoon bridge across the Guadiana, which was swept away on 22 March. This along with other difficulties led Wellington to decide that his main effort would attack the fort from the southeast. On 24 March his forces captured Fort Picaruna. This allowed his artillery to have the necessary effect on the city walls, but the flooded Rivallas and French sorties still disrupted progress.<sup>20</sup>

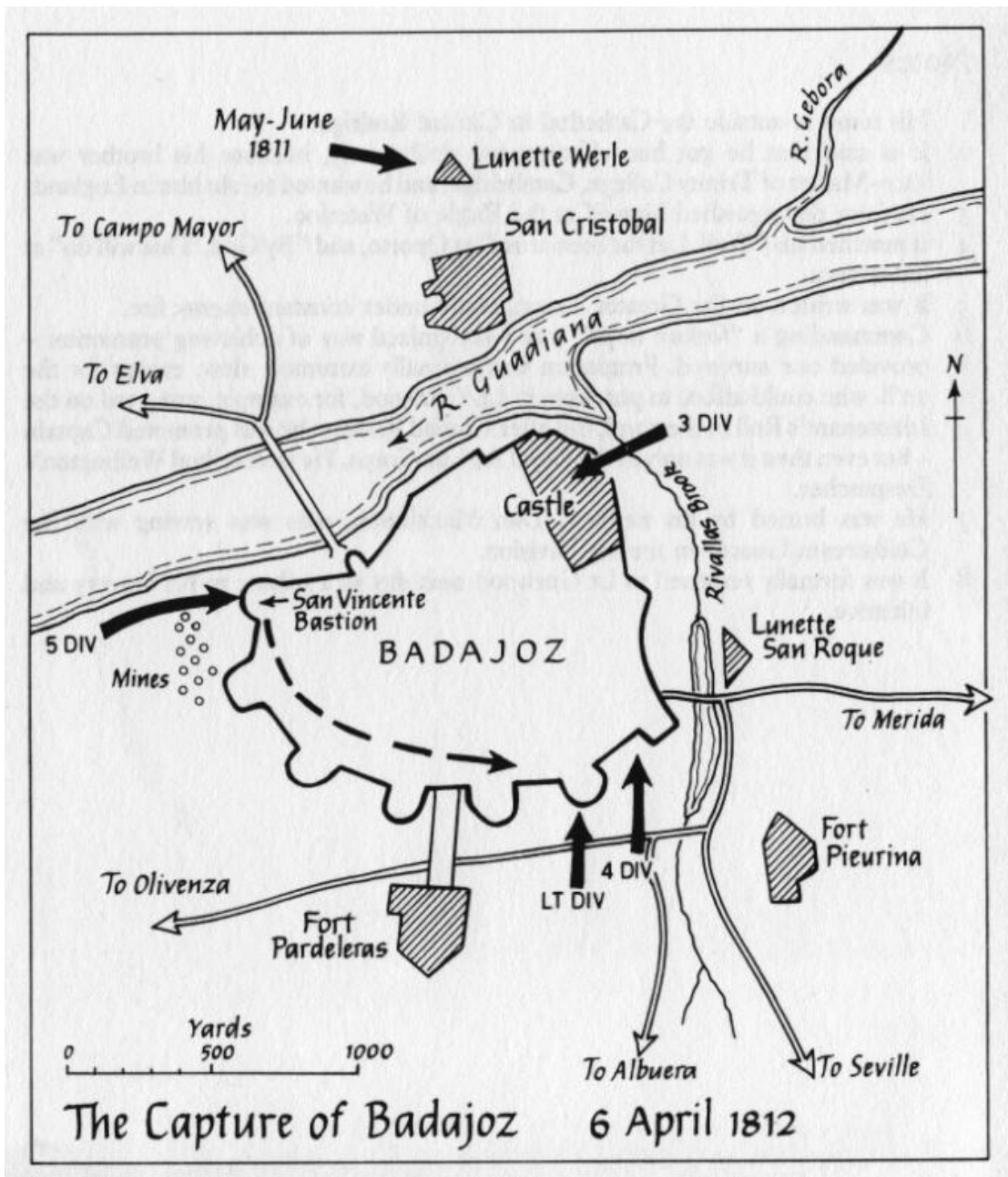


Figure 2. Badajoz

Source: Julian Paget, *Wellington's Peninsular War* (London: Leo Cooper, 1996), 148.

Again, reports reached Wellington that French forces under Marshal Nicolas Soult and Marmont were moving toward him and the Portuguese frontier respectively. He would have to attack again before the city's defenses were acceptably reduced. His plan was to send the Light and Fourth Divisions against breaches in the southeast, with the Third Division making a diversionary attack on the castle from the east. The Fifth Division was to seize the bastion of San Vincente to the northwest, as well as a feint to the north against the bastion of Lunette San Roque. Despite having only three incomplete breaches in the walls, on 6 April (Easter Sunday) Wellington ordered his attack.<sup>21</sup>

The attack went poorly from the onset. After a two hour delay, the Third Division, having been spotted moving in their trenches by the French, attacked fifteen minutes early. The Fifth Division attacked an hour late, and confusion ensued. Meanwhile, the Light and Fourth Divisions advanced down the west bank of the Rivallas brook under heavy fire. Their advance was disrupted by a twelve foot deep water-filled ditch which had to be bypassed. As the two forces reached the dry moat along the approaches to the Santa Maria bastion, the French defenders ignited the combustible materials and mines in the moat. The resulting explosions wiped out the lead elements of both divisions, killing and wounding nearly a thousand men. As they pushed forward, the two divisions converged into a mass of humanity, and the French poured shot and musketry into them.<sup>22</sup>

Despite their determined efforts, Allied troops continued to be cut down in the moat. Tiny groups of soldiers banded together to make ad hoc charges, and more than forty of these ~~desperate~~ "little bands" hurled themselves toward the breach in the course

of the next two hours. Having suffered more than 2,000 casualties, Wellington ordered the divisions withdrawn. Even as the carnage in the moat occurred, Sir Thomas Picton's Third Division was assailing the castle walls. Many of the Allied ladders were too short, and roughly seven hundred Allied troops were killed or wounded in the ascent.

Nevertheless, when Picton pressed his third brigade into the attack, the French were driven from their position. The Fifth Division was able to overwhelm the French at the San Vincente bastion to the west, and joined Picton's men in their assault. As Picton's men and the Fifth Division attacked through the city from the north toward the main breach, the Light and Fourth Divisions resumed their attack at the breach. Caught between converging forces the French soon surrendered. The victory was marred not only by the disorder and high casualties, but the twenty-nine hours of violence, looting, and pillaging carried out by allied soldiers afterward.<sup>23</sup>

The actions and contributions of Portuguese and Spanish forces to the capture of Badajoz were even more noteworthy than at Ciudad Rodrigo, and began long before the battle. Wellington employed the King's German Legion, and formations of Portuguese and Spanish Cavalry to man positions around Ciudad Rodrigo as his forces slipped to the south unnoticed by the French. The initial movement was even led by Brigadier General Charles Ashworth's Portuguese brigade beginning on 2 February. Although they did not play a major part in the assault on Badajoz, Sir John Hamilton's Portuguese Division was among the 60,000 Allied troops on the march, as were Pack's and Major General Thomas Bradford's independent Portuguese brigades who along with the Fifth Division formed Wellington's reserve.<sup>24</sup>

Even before leaving for Badajoz however, Wellington made elaborate arrangements for maintaining control of the frontier in his absence through a series of letters to Spanish General Francis Xavier Castaños, and Portuguese Generals Manuel Baccelar and Francisco Silveira. Wellington knew that despite his best intentions, he was assuming great risk. Castaños' Army of Galicia numbered only 15,000 troops, more than 8,000 of whom had been assigned to garrison the cities and towns throughout the province. Castaños' other force, the Army of Estremadura had even fewer troops available--with the force's core, Carlos de España's division, charged with garrisoning Ciudad Rodrigo. Julian Sanchez's heralded guerrillero cavalry was about twelve hundred strong and were now counted as part of the regular army with the formal distinction of "1st and 2nd Lancers of Castille."<sup>25</sup>

Aside from securing the Portuguese frontier, Wellington needed his Spanish allies to accomplish one other objective: to strike at Seville as soon as reports came that the French had moved north. General Castaños complied and provided roughly 4,000 infantry and 1,000 cavalry to accomplish this task. Wellington hoped the General Ballasteros with his "moving corps" would cooperate, but he declined:

But Ballasteros was always a law unto himself, and it was impossible to count upon him: he particularly disliked suggestions from a British quarter, while Castaños was always sensible and obliging.<sup>26</sup>

Baccelar and Siveira's Portuguese troops defending the northern frontier were all militia, with the exception of a couple of batteries of artillery and a cavalry brigade. The strength of this force numbered around 20,000, but they were widely dispersed and very "second rate" in quality:

[Most] battalions had only been under arms intermittently, for periods of six months, and the officers were for the most part the inefficient leavings of the

regular army. Of the generals Silveira was enterprising, but never bold, as the record of his earlier campaigns sufficiently demonstrated . . . Baccelar passed as a slow but fairly safe commander, rather lacking in self-confidence.<sup>27</sup>

Although the action at Badajoz did not unfold as smoothly as the assault on Ciudad Rodrigo, Wellington again employed his Portuguese forces side by side with his British troops without hesitation. Of his nearly 900 artillerymen, 560 were Portuguese. During the assault on the city, both columns of the Fourth and Light Divisions assaulted with their Portuguese brigades at their center with a British regiment in front and one behind. Power's Portuguese brigade and the Portuguese brigade of the Fifth Division made effective false attacks in the early confusion of the battle holding French troops in position and leaving them unable to be repositioned to reinforce against the main attack. During the Third Division ascent of the castle walls, it was Chaplemond's Portuguese brigade that made the second assault, paving the way for the third (and successful) assault which caused the French defenders to quit the castle and eventually attacked the main breach from the rear.<sup>28</sup>

The high casualties endured by the Portuguese regiments attest to their valor in combat: the Portuguese forces fighting with the Fourth and Light Divisions lost more than four hundred men, and the Fifth Division recorded more than two hundred Portuguese casualties. Unfortunately, the Portuguese soldiers' emulation of their British brothers did not end with their bravery under fire, as multiple eyewitness accounts attest to Portuguese soldiers taking part in the city's sacking after the battle.<sup>29</sup>

The recapture of Ciudad Rodrigo and Badajoz served as a powerful antidote to the negative impression created by the failures and retreats of the previous three years. It was the first significant Anglo-Portuguese victory since May 1811 when they defeated

Massena at Fuentes de Oñoro and retook Almeida. Wellington's stock seemed to skyrocket on both sides of the Portuguese frontier. Upon his return to Ciudad Rodrigo he was greeted by cheering crowds, a path strewn with flowers, and was forced to stand on the balcony of city hall for an hour and a half while crowds cheered him. Flurries of pro-British sentiment also began to appear in the press throughout the peninsula; the Portuguese found new confidence in the man in whose care they had placed their army. British observers began to note a desire (among Spanish leaders) for the Spanish army to be placed in his hands as well.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Gates, 326.

<sup>2</sup>Paget, 143.

<sup>3</sup>Gates, 326.

<sup>4</sup>Paget, 144.

<sup>5</sup>Charles Oman, *A History of the Peninsular War, Volume V, October 1811 to August 31, 1812* (London: Greenhill Books, 2005), 177-179.

<sup>6</sup>C.W. Robinson, *Lectures on the Peninsula War* (London: W. Mitchell and Co., 1871), 142.

<sup>7</sup>Paget, 144.

<sup>8</sup>*Ibid.*, 144-145.

<sup>9</sup>Oman, 166.

<sup>10</sup>*Ibid.*, 173.

<sup>11</sup>*Ibid.*, 167.

<sup>12</sup>*Ibid.*, 179.

<sup>13</sup>*Ibid.*, 178.

<sup>14</sup>*Ibid.*, 167.

- <sup>15</sup>Ibid., 149.
- <sup>16</sup>Robinson, 142.
- <sup>17</sup>Ibid., 145.
- <sup>18</sup>Oman, 188.
- <sup>19</sup>Gates, 334-335.
- <sup>20</sup>Paget, 149.
- <sup>21</sup>Ibid., 150.
- <sup>22</sup>Gates, 338.
- <sup>23</sup>Ibid., 338-339.
- <sup>24</sup>Oman, 218-219.
- <sup>25</sup>Ibid., 220.
- <sup>26</sup>Ibid., 230.
- <sup>27</sup>Ibid., 221.
- <sup>28</sup>Ibid., 225, 244-251.
- <sup>29</sup>Ibid., 250, 253, 263.
- <sup>30</sup>Esdaile, *The Duke of Wellington*, 47.

## CHAPTER 3

### THE SALAMANCA CAMPAIGN

If seizing Ciudad Rodrigo and Badajoz set the stage for an advance into Spain, this result was not immediately obvious. Almost immediately after his victory, Wellington left 10,000 men to repair Badajoz then marched the bulk his force north to deter French forces threatening Ciudad Rodrigo and Portugal. Once back at Ciudad Rodrigo, Wellington rested his forces while he contemplated his next action. In deciding whether to move against Marmont at Salamanca, Soult in Estremadura, or Joseph Bonaparte in central Spain he had to consider three factors: which of these could mass the greatest number of forces against him, which option left his flank and lines of communication most exposed, and which offered him the best chance to deliver a defeat to the French in Spain. Wellington decided to attack Marmont.<sup>1</sup>

As a prelude to his offensive, Wellington sought to isolate Marmont's army from Soult's by destroying a pontoon bridge over the Tagus River at Almaraz. In early May, General Sir Rowland Hill with a force of 7,000 men set out to destroy the bridge. He was supported by two divisions under General Sir Thomas Graham to protect his flanks and rear from elements of Soult's widely dispersed army. On 18 May, Hill conducted a successful raid in which he captured and demolished five small forts protecting the crossing, as well as the bridge itself.<sup>2</sup>

Wellington, in a letter to Lord Liverpool, now felt the situation had turned in his favor:

I propose as soon as the [army's] magazines are brought forward, to move forward into Castille, and to endeavor to bring Marmont to a general action. I am of the opinion that I shall have the advantage in the action, and that this is the

period in which such a measure should be tried . . . Strong as the enemy are at present, they are weaker than they have ever been during the war. We have the better chance of success now, therefore, that we have ever had; and success obtained now would produce results not to be expected from any success over any single French army in the Peninsula upon any other occasion.<sup>3</sup>

To further ensure Marmont's isolation, Wellington made every effort to coordinate for, or in the case of the Spanish, convince other Allied forces to assist him by pinning down French forces across the peninsula. Hill and Ballesteros were directed to hold Soult's attention to the south. He again called on Julian Sanchez and his fellow guerilla commanders to keep the French engaged across Castille and Navarre. Wellington also arranged for naval forces to support the guerillas in the north, and others to threaten French Marshal Louis Suchet along the Mediterranean coast. Finally, he urged Spanish General Jose Maria Santocildes 16,000-man Army of Galicia to go on the offensive in order to threaten Marmont's rear area.<sup>4</sup>

On 13 June Wellington's columns, totaling eight infantry divisions, one cavalry division, and fifty-four guns, moved out of Fuentes Guinaldo and Ciudad Rodrigo and marched toward Salamanca. Marmont, who had only two infantry divisions and one cavalry division in the area of the city, decide to fall back. Seeking to assemble his forces, he issued orders for the Army of Portugal to concentrate at Fuente Sauco and abandoned Salamanca. To deny the Allies the use of the old Roman bridge across the Tormes at Salamanca, Marmont left a garrison of eight hundred men with thirty-six light field guns in three convents that had been converted into strong points. He hoped to contain the Allied army until reinforcements could arrive.<sup>5</sup>

Even before his withdrawal, Marmont had been communicating with Marshal Jean-Baptiste Jourdan and General Marie F.A. Caffarelli concerning reinforcements, but

the Allied movements that Wellington had put into motion were having their intended effect. Each commander's local concerns overrode Marmont's request for more troops. Furthermore, Marmont knew he could not count on Joseph Bonaparte in Madrid to send troops out of the central reserve given the recent reductions in preparation for Napoleon's invasion of Russia.<sup>6</sup>

Meanwhile, Wellington was surprised by the strength of the three forts guarding the bridge at Salamanca. He expected no significant defenses but found that the old convents had been extensively reinforced with masonry and earthworks. Additionally, structures around the convents had been razed to clear fields of fire. Wellington realized that a formal siege would be required, even though the army had not brought forward the proper siege equipment. The alternatives were to ~~mask~~"mask" the forts and continue the pursuit of Marmont or to improvise a siege with the equipment at hand.<sup>7</sup>

There was risk in masking or bypassing the forts in that it would reduce the total strength of the Allied army or leave their rear and line of communication exposed. Wellington thought he may be able to draw Marmont back to Salamanca, and decided to besiege the forts with Clinton's Sixth Division, while the remainder of the army was positioned outside of the city in a defensive line from San Critobal to Cabrerizos.<sup>8</sup>

On 17 June, work on the fortifications for the first battery for the siege and its communications trenches began. The battery was sited about 250 yards from the convent of St. Vicente, the most formidable of the three forts. On the morning of the nineteenth, the guns were in position and began firing.<sup>9</sup> The guns were not heavy enough for proper siege work, and did only superficial damage to the masonry. By the evening of the twentieth, the ammunition available for the siege was nearly depleted and the British

halted firing without achieving the necessary effects for an assault. That same day Marmont appeared in front of the Allied position with less than 30,000 men.

The two armies faced each other until the night of 22 June, when French retired to a defensive position between Aldea Rubia and Huerta. It is unclear why Wellington did not attack Marmont on the evening of the twentieth (or thereafter) when he clearly had a numerical advantage. Wellington was likely convinced that Marmont would attack him and he was obliged to wait ~~in~~ one of his favorite defensive positions.”<sup>10</sup> Some reports say that Wellington even attempted to lure Marmont by attacking a French outpost with elements of the Seventh and Light Divisions but failed to do so and refused to turn the attack into a general action.<sup>11</sup>

Before Marmont retired to Aldea Rubia, Wellington ordered an assault to reduce the redoubt of Gayetano, using the last of the siege ammunition. He thought that the redoubt could be taken quickly, allowing the siege guns to be moved closer to St. Vicente. An attempt to storm the redoubt on the night of 23 June failed with heavy losses incurred.

A lull in the action followed the failed assault until additional siege ammunition arrived on 26 June, and the guns commenced firing. Late in the day the Allies succeeded in setting several fires in the convent of St. Vicente. The following morning the French asked that they be allowed to surrender in three hours with the full honors of war. An angry Wellington gave them five minutes to surrender, and at the end of the allotted time, ordered the attacks to resume. The defenders put up little resistance and quickly surrendered. This unexpectedly hard-fought engagement cost the Allied army ten days and three hundred casualties.<sup>12</sup>

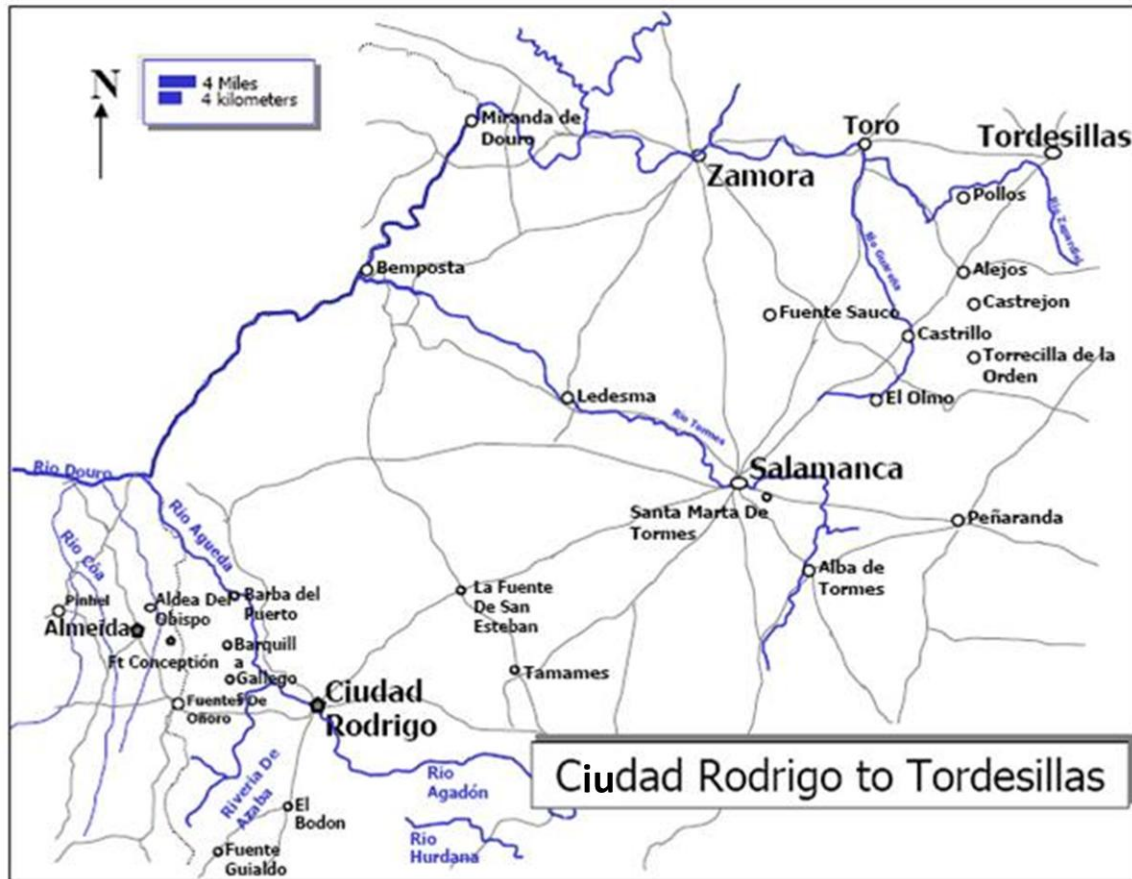


Figure 3. Ciudad Rodrigo to Tordesillas

Source: Mark T. Gerges, "Command and Control in the Peninsula: The Role of the British Cavalry 1808-1814" (PhD diss., Florida State University, 2005), 233.

When Marmont learned that the Salamanca forts had fallen, he retreated to the Douro River where he occupied a line from Pollos to Simacas. All of the river crossings in the area were controlled by the French. Wellington followed and by 4 July was also at the Douro in force. He spent the next ten days looking unsuccessfully for a way to cross the river.

With control of all available river crossings, Marmont's army was in no immediate danger of attack. Wellington ordered a small force across the Douro at Pollos

on 3 July, but did not want to move the bulk of his force until he controlled more than one crossing in order to ensure that he could not be isolated on the north side. Wellington was also forced to be cautious in the absence of a greater threat to Marmont's rear. He had tried to entice the Spanish Army of Galicia into action in this regard, but General Jose Maria Santocildes was engaged in the siege of Astorga, and declined to detach more than 3,800 men. Even then, the Spaniards proceeded only as far as the Esla River and was never a serious threat to Marmont. The only other Allied forces operating in Marmont's rear area was Major-General Benjamin D'Urban's small Portuguese cavalry brigade (about 800 men) which had crossed the Douro at Castronuevo on 2 July, and a handful of Portuguese militia under Silveira. They served as helpful diversion and disrupted French communications, but in terms of real offensive capability they could only keep the French from foraging in their immediate area.<sup>13</sup>

Despite this, one particular aspect of the campaign that highlights Wellington's success in rapidly assembling, training, and integrating Portuguese forces was the collection of D'Urban's three regiments of Portuguese *Chasseurs*- the 1st, 11th and 12th regiments. On 1 June, Wellington had ordered D'Urban to Braganza to assemble the three Portuguese regiments. D'Urban's mission was to operate on the rear of the French lines of communication as the Allied army advanced. The three regiments would take some time to prepare for the battle because the mounts had been turned out to pasture and were hardly trained. By 24 June the hastily assembled Portuguese cavalry brigade under D'Urban marched to join the main army.<sup>14</sup>

In early July, while the two opposing armies continued their pattern of probing, D'Urban's Portuguese cavalry brigade began to have an impact. Wellington originally

ordered D'Urban to cross the Elsa River to act in the French rear or to cut French communication between Zamora and Benevente. These actions would add to the French uncertainty of the Allied advance and possibly divert some French forces from opposing the Allied army's main advance. However, those instructions had been rendered obsolete by the rapid Allied advance and the delay in assembling the Portuguese brigade.

D'Urban, therefore, decided to act on Wellington's intent instead of strictly by the letter of his orders. D'Urban marched his cavalry deeper into the French rear.<sup>15</sup>

On 8 July the Portuguese cavalry had passed Peñaflor and Portuguese patrols spread across the area seeking intelligence and announcing their presence in the French rear. Soon, large dust clouds were reported in the distance. D'Urban later learned that two French columns searching for his elusive force caused those dust clouds. These were elements of General Jean Pierre Francois Bonnet's division, searching for D'Urban. This fact confirmed the effectiveness of his diversionary role. By 15 July Wellington decided that D'Urban's force had accomplished all that it could, and sent orders to D'Urban to rejoin the main army.<sup>16</sup>

The French were now arrayed from the junction of the Pisuerga and Douro Rivers near Simancas, on the left, to Pollos, on the right. The bulk of the French army was to cover the area between Toro and Pollos, including the ford at Castro Nuño, which Wellington had sent a force to reconnoiter on the third. Two days later the French were joined by General Bonnet's division from the Asturias. Marmont now had close to 43,000 infantry and 3,200 cavalry in his ranks. About a third of the cavalry was mounted on the personal horses of French officers requisitioned for cavalry use.<sup>17</sup>

Wellington deployed his forces on a line from Pollos to Tordesillas with the First and Seventh Divisions in reserve at Medina del Campo, ten miles in the rear. His unwillingness to cross the Douro confused the French staff. They concluded that either his army was much weaker than originally reported or he was waiting for Hill to come up from Estremadura. Hill's presence in south however continued to be a great concern for Soult and remained a factor in not reinforcing Marmont. The French estimated Wellington's strength fairly accurately at 50,000 but under estimated the proportion of British at 18,000 instead of 30,000. This miscalculation was a direct result of Wellington's ability to put more British forces in the field as he assessed the Portuguese *Ordenanza* capable enough to protect the Portuguese frontier on their own. This flawed estimate also led the French to believe that Wellington's force would be reinforced with additional British troops. Marmont was ordered to attack before those reinforcements arrived, despite the fact that he was outnumbered.<sup>18</sup>

Marmont began his offensive on 15 July with an effort to repair the bridge at Toro and cross the Douro. The remainder of his force began marching on the morning of the sixteenth. The French appeared to be intent on cutting the Allied army off from their line of communication with Salamanca. Wellington recognized the maneuver as a threat to his flank, furthermore, he received reports that additional French forces were marching to Marmont's assistance from the south. Wellington felt compelled to fall back and concentrate his army for a fight at the first good defensive position.<sup>19</sup>

Wellington ordered his army to concentrate on the afternoon of 16 July. The right wing of the army, under Lieutenant General Sir Stapleton Cotton, was to maintain the pickets while the rest of the force began the withdrawal and subsequent westward

movement. The Fourth and Light Divisions, along with Anson's cavalry brigade, maneuvered toward Rueda, and in the absence of contact with the French eventually retired to Castrajon to serve as a rearguard. By the morning of 17 July, the bulk of the army occupied a line along the Guarena River from Fuente la Pena to Catrillo, prepared for the expected attack. Instead, Wellington received reports that the French had retired across the Douro and broken the bridge at Toro.<sup>20</sup>

In fact, Marmont outmaneuvered Wellington, and was now in a position to seriously threaten his rearguard. On the night of 16-17 July, Marmont reversed his army and crossed the Douro at Tordesillas, marching hard to reach Rueda and La Seca on the morning of the seventeenth. Bonnet crossed at Pollos, and by nightfall the French army concentrated around Nava del Rey. On the morning of 18 July Wellington set out with most of his cavalry to supervise rearguard's retreat. When he arrived at their position he found the senior commander, Cotton, calmly conducting a holding action while awaiting further orders. He had sent out cavalry patrols at dawn and learned the extent of the French force in front of him. He was keeping the French engaged without committing a large number of troops.<sup>21</sup>

The French were in the process of turning the Allied left flank forcing a withdrawal. The British carried out the retreat with little loss though there were occasional sharp skirmishes. Once his army was safely behind the Guarena, Wellington prepared for the sort of defensive battle he preferred. For a moment it seemed that he might get his wish. A small force on the French right made a sudden attempt to cross the Guarena and swoop down the allied left flank. Some heavy fighting occurred before the French were pushed back across the river. By evening the fighting ceased and the two

armies were camped on the opposite sides of the river. Both armies rested on 19 July, but that evening the French began to edge southward and Wellington was compelled to mirror their movements.<sup>22</sup>

Both armies marched in parallel columns to the south. Wellington had his army in three columns while Marmont's army marched in just two. During the march, officers saluted each other in friendly fashion while occasionally cannon exchanged a more violent salute. One officer called the march a "beautiful military spectacle."<sup>23</sup>

The French gradually moved ahead of the Allied advance guard. Marmont wanted to turn Wellington's right or even envelop him completely, but the two armies marched so closely that he was unable to do so. Marmont inclined his line of march to the southwest which forced Wellington to follow suit. The two armies diverged at Cantalpino. By the end of the day Marmont had succeeded in reaching the fords at Huerta and very nearly turned Wellington's flank, but both armies were extremely fatigued. Despite a series of skirmishes, losses had been light, mostly stragglers on the Allied side. The next morning Wellington's army moved into the defensive position at San Cristobal which it had occupied the previous month. Marmont crossed the Tormes at Huerta and La Encina, leaving two divisions between Babila Fuente and Huerta to cover the crossing. Wellington did not cross the Tormes until later that afternoon. By nightfall the two armies bivouacked opposite each other in the hills. The French army was south of Calvarisa de Ariba and Manchon while the Allied army was to the north of Nuestra Senora de la Pena. The soldiers rested, unaware that the coming days would bring the most decisive engagement of the Peninsular War to date.<sup>24</sup>

These opening maneuvers of the Salamanca Campaign further reinforced Allied success in developing Portuguese regiments into not only professional, reliable fighting formations but an integral part of Wellington's army. As they had in the past, Portuguese militia manned the lines of Torres Vedras and the Portuguese frontier freeing British and Portuguese regulars to go on the offensive. The Portuguese brigade attached to the Second Division, Colonel John Campbell's Portuguese cavalry, and a company of Portuguese artillery all performed well in the raid to seize the forts and destroy the bridge at Almaraz. D'Urban's cavalry succeeded in their role in diverting and confusing the French, as well as gathering intelligence and disrupting communications. Later, Major General John Hamilton's Portuguese division and Major General Manley Power's Portuguese brigade made up a large part of the force critical to holding French forces in Estremadura, denying Marmont his badly needed reinforcements.<sup>25</sup>

As for the actual movement toward Marmont, Pack's and Bradford's Portuguese brigades marched with and fought alongside Wellington's divisions almost seamlessly in addition to the organic Portuguese regiments within the British divisions. Carlos de España contributed 3,000 Spanish troops, but Wellington was never completely comfortable with the discipline or fighting effectiveness of the Spaniards and chose to utilize them only as a portion of his reserve. Of greater significance was the apparent emerging spirit of cooperation between Wellington and Spain's civil and military authorities. Although Spain's generals, particularly Ballesteros, had earned a reputation for disobeying orders from civil authority and scoffing at British advice during the early years of the war, the outset of the Salamanca campaign saw increased levels of communication.<sup>26</sup>

While greater coordination was a welcome sign, the initial results were not always positive. Santocildes' Army of Galicia never did fully accommodate Wellington's desires to present a significant threat to Marmont. In another case, Wellington urged the Cadiz Regency to have Ballesteros occupy French attention with a demonstration at Seville. Ballesteros complied enthusiastically, but his poor judgment in carrying out the action led to a costly defeat at the battle of Bornos on 1 June.<sup>27</sup>

Finally, Wellington's stock amongst the guerillas and peasantry began to rise after his successes earlier in the year. The payoffs were immense in terms of the population's willingness to treat British troop movements as "state secrets" to be hidden from the French, while details about French troop movements and dispatches captured by the guerillas regularly made their way to Wellington. Such valuable intelligence often gave Wellington better awareness of the French situation than many of the French commanders. While contact between Wellington and the guerillas was not without friction, many guerillas were becoming increasingly amenable to his efforts, and willingly acted upon his requests to keep French forces busy and widely dispersed.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Robinson, 145-146.

<sup>2</sup>Gates, 340-342.

<sup>3</sup>Arthur Wellesley, Duke of Wellington. *The Dispatches of Field Marshal the Duke of Wellington, during his Various Campaigns in India, Denmark, Portugal, Spain, the Low Countries, and France, from 1799 to 1818*, (London, 1852), Wellington to Liverpool, 26 May 1812, IX, 170-175. Hereafter cited as *Wellington's Dispatches*.

<sup>4</sup>Gates, 343.

<sup>5</sup>Jack Allen Meyer, "Wellington's Generalship" (PhD diss., University of Michigan, 1984), 185.

<sup>6</sup>*Ibid.*, 186-188.

<sup>7</sup>John T. Jones, *Account of the War in Spain and Portugal, and in the South of France: From 1808 to 1814, inclusive* (London: T. Edgerton, 1821), 158-160.

<sup>8</sup>Meyer, 190.

<sup>9</sup>Jones, 160-162.

<sup>10</sup>Meyer, 191.

<sup>11</sup>Oman, 368-369.

<sup>12</sup>Jones, 166-170.

<sup>13</sup>Meyer, 194.

<sup>14</sup>Mark T. Gerges, "Command and Control in the Peninsula: The Role of the British Cavalry 1808-1814" (PhD diss., Florida State University, 2005), 264-265.

<sup>15</sup>*Ibid.*, 270.

<sup>16</sup>*Ibid.*, 271.

<sup>17</sup>Oman, 391-392.

<sup>18</sup>Meyer, 197.

<sup>19</sup>Wellington to Clinton, 16 July 1812, *Wellington's Dispatches*, IX, 293-4.

<sup>20</sup>Meyer, 198.

<sup>21</sup>J.P. Lawford and Peter Young, *Wellington's Masterpiece, the Battle and Campaign of Salamanca* (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd, 1972), 186-187.

<sup>22</sup>Lawford and Young, 189.

<sup>23</sup>Meyer, 201.

<sup>24</sup>Gerges, 278-279.

<sup>25</sup>Oman, 321-323.

<sup>26</sup>Esdaile, *The Duke of Wellington*, 64-65.

<sup>27</sup>Oman, 336.

<sup>28</sup>*Ibid.*, 318-319.

## CHAPTER 4

### THE BATTLE OF SALAMANCA

On the morning 22 July, both armies were positioned in the hills southeast of Salamanca just out of sight of one another. Wellington believed that the French could not cross the fords at Huerta with the Spanish garrison posted at the castle of Alba de Tormes. He was unaware however that the garrison was withdrawn by Carlos d'España and Marmont had placed a French garrison there. With the Allied right flank unguarded, Marmont moved his entire army across the Tormes the evening of 21 July, and took up a position in a body of woods near Calvarisa de Arriba.<sup>1</sup>

Expecting Wellington to continue his retreat, Marmont planned to continue a flanking maneuver against the Allied left and wait for favorable conditions to attack the rearguard. Wellington meanwhile planned to hold Salamanca as long as possible but ~~not~~ to give up our communication with Ciudad Rodrigo; and not fight an action unless under very advantageous circumstances.” He knew that 10,000-12,000 French reinforcements were on their way to Marmont, which would make it ~~almost~~ impossible to remain in Castile after an inconclusive battle.”<sup>2</sup>

The fact that the French could only see the Seventh Division near Nuestra Señora de la Peña and the baggage train moving toward Ciudad Rodrigo, seemingly confirmed Marmont's belief about the Allied retreat. The rest of the Wellington's forces were concealed by the low hills throughout the area. The dominant terrain in the area was the two hills referred to as the *Hermanitos*. The Lesser Arapile, the lower of the two, was occupied by the allies, but the Greater Arapile remained unoccupied. Both commanders

ordered forces to take the hill, but the French acted more quickly and seized the ground shortly after eight o'clock in the morning.<sup>3</sup>

At the same time, skirmishing erupted near the village of Nuestra Señora de la Peña as light troops of the Seventh Division and Pack's Brigade engaged General Maximilien Foy's Division. The French pickets were pushed back forcing Foy to bring up artillery to stop the Allied advance; fighting died out shortly thereafter. Foy remained near the village while the remainder of the French army was moved to the south of the Greater Arapile.<sup>4</sup>

Wellington could observe the French movements and responded in kind. He moved the Fourth Division near the village of Arapiles, while the Seventh, First, and Light Divisions remained in their old positions opposite the plateau of Calvarisa de Ariba. Portions of the Seventh were still trading fire with Foy's division periodically, but to no definitive result. The Fifth and Sixth Divisions along with Carlos de España's Spanish forces formed Wellington's reserve near the village of Las Torres. The Third Division and D'Urban's cavalry were ordered to Aldea Tejada to guard the road to Ciudad Rodrigo. While he waited for an opportunity to attack, Wellington simultaneously drew up plans to retreat to the line of the Zurgain River above Aldea Tejada and abandon Salamanca when necessary.<sup>5</sup>

Early in the afternoon, Marmont began to extend his left wing further to the left. The divisions of General Jean Guillaume Thomières and General Antoine Maucune moved to occupy the plateau adjacent to Arapiles with General Bertrand Clausel's division following. As Maucune and Clausel's divisions paused to send skirmishers toward the village, Thomières continued to march and became dangerously isolated.

Wellington was alerted to the French movement and quickly rode to the scene.

Observing the gaps in the French line, he realized he had found his opportunity to destroy the French piecemeal.

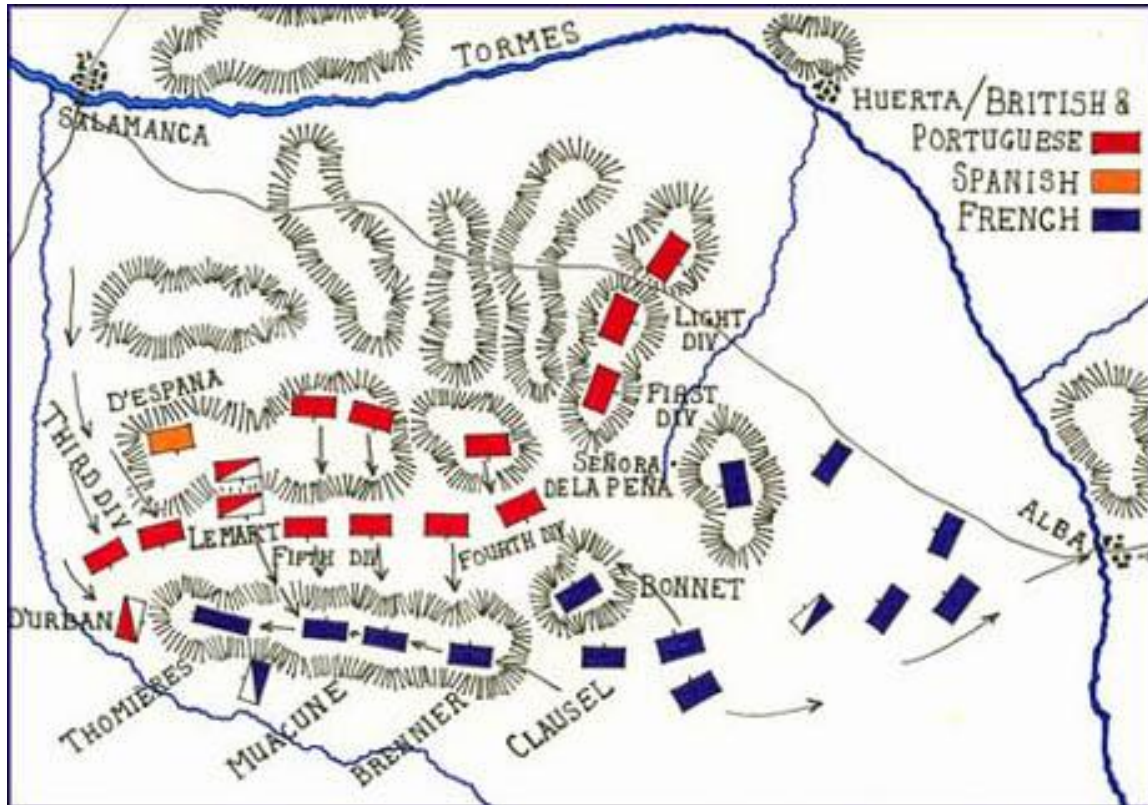


Figure 4. Salamanca

Source: "Battle of Salamanca," British Battles.com, <http://www.britishbattles.com/peninsula/peninsula-salamanca.htm> (accessed January 31, 2009).

Wellington ordered the Third Division under Major-General Edward Pakenham to advance ~~in~~ a double column across the enemy's left . . . for line, carry the height and sweep everything before it."<sup>6</sup> D'Urban's cavalry was ordered to support this attack,

while Fifth Division attacked Maucune's division and the Fourth Division and Pack's Portuguese attacked Clausel's Division.<sup>7</sup>

At about four in the afternoon, Marmont was seriously wounded by a British shell and Bonnet took command. Roughly an hour later the British attacked. Bonnet was also wounded and command of the French fell to Clausel who was heavily engaged and not able to reposition and take command of the army for another hour.<sup>8</sup>

The Third Division and D'Urban's troops advanced in four columns as ordered. The infantry was arrayed so that it could quickly form a line and turn the flank. D'Urban deployed three squadrons of the 1st Portuguese Dragoons to attack Thomières advanced guard of light infantry. To maintain the momentum of the attack by his cavalry, D'Urban deployed the 11th Portuguese and two squadrons of the 14th Light Dragoons that had arrived at his position.<sup>9</sup> With the rolling terrain concealing the British advance, and the cavalry screen on the opposite side of his formation, Thomières had little time to prepare his defense. Taken completely by surprise, two French regiments were decimated in the initial attack. The French cavalry fell back, reformed, and made a futile attempt to blunt the Allied advance. Soon afterward the entire division broke and fled in the face of the advancing 1st Hussars, 14th Light Dragoons, and D'Urban's Portuguese cavalry in a second line.<sup>10</sup> The eagle of the 101st *Ligne* was captured and Thomières was killed attempting to rally his men.

As soon as the Third Division closed with the French, the Fifth Division began their advance. All advanced in good order although generally unable to see the French at a distance due to the rising ground. Both sides delivered intense volumes of fire, but the French gave ground seeing Thomières division fleeing. A series of charges by

LeMarchant's dragoons set Maucune's division into panicked flight. Driven through the nearby woods, French soldiers emerged on the far side only to run into D'Urban's Portuguese brigade which had been moving along the southern flank of the Third Division's attack. A timely charge by the 14th Light Dragoons dispersed the French cavalry, and allowed D'Urban's brigade to continue the attack on the French unimpeded.<sup>11</sup>

On the left, the Fourth Division advanced against Clausel's division while Pack's Portuguese attempted to protect the flank and drive the French off the Greater Arapile. Pack's brigade consisted of the 1st and 16th Portuguese (two battalions each) and the 4th *Caçadores*. On the morning of the battle, the 4th *Caçadores* had taken part in the skirmishing around Nuestra Señora de la Peña, while the rest of the brigade occupied a position in the Allied line between the Lesser Arapile and Stubb's brigade of the Fourth Division. Immediately opposite the Portuguese was the gap between the Greater Arapile and the beginning of the plateau occupied by the 122nd *Ligne* of Bonnet's division.<sup>12</sup>

According to eyewitness accounts, Pack deployed his troops as if he were going to attack a fortress. They were led by a storming party of one hundred men of the 4th *Caçadores* under Major P. Fearon who were ordered to "gain as much ground as up the hill as the enemy would let them, and then lie down."<sup>13</sup> The remaining *caçadores* were to advance on either side in open order and provide covering fire for the attack. The storming party was supported by four grenadier companies (one from each battalion) under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel Neil Campbell. The remainder of the brigade followed in two columns: the two battalions of the 1st Regiment under Lieutenant-

Colonel Noel Hill on the right; the two battalions of the 16th Regiment under Colonel Pizarro on the left.<sup>14</sup>

Pack believed their only hope of success lay in a determined charge which might carry the hill in a rush. He ordered his troops to advance with unloaded muskets, —“for once such troops as we had began firing they would never get to the top.”<sup>15</sup> Pack knew that if the attack lost momentum, the assault would fail--and there was nothing to be gained by having his troops standing on the barren hillside firing muskets at the French still securely positioned at the summit.<sup>16</sup>

The difficult terrain and withering French fire led to disaster for Pack’s troops. The Portuguese were repulsed and sustained heavy losses, allowing the French to attack the Fourth’s flank and rear and compelling them to retreat:

Pack had led his men up its slopes with great dash; but as his men neared the top, where the slope was particularly steep, the 120th *Ligne* suddenly sprang into view only a few yards away. The breathless Portuguese found themselves staring into leveled muskets which almost immediately vomited fire and destruction. The French, as the Portuguese reeled before the discharge, rushed down the hillside; the unfortunate Portuguese were hurled to the bottom with heavy loss and, in a disorganized mob, ran back to seek refuge in Point 901. Looking at the ground after the battle, Napier himself judged that no troops in the world could have withstood such a shock on such ground . . . Now that Obelisk Hill was no longer threatened, the reserve two regiments of Bonet’s division and the 122nd *Ligne* were free to concentrate against the vulnerable left of the Fourth Division.<sup>17</sup>

Clausel, now fully in command of the French, attempted to salvage the situation by exploiting the collapse of the Fourth Division. He ordered an attack into the gap, but Wellington still had three divisions in reserve. Wellington sent the Sixth Division into the gap, while Beresford detached Brigadier General William F. Spry’s Portuguese from the Fifth Division to accompany the Sixth in their advance. Beresford himself led Spry’s brigade diagonally along the southern slope of the plateau and into Clausel’s flank.

Thrown back, Clausel's forces tried to reform in the face of the Portuguese push. Once reformed, the French were unable to move forward, and Spry's five Portuguese battalions achieved their purpose of stopping the French advance.<sup>18</sup>

After an intense exchange of musketry, the fresh Allied troops pushed the French into the nearby woods. Clausel only had two intact divisions remaining under Foy and Claude Fracois Ferey. As the Sixth Division pressed their attack against what they believed to be "shaken troops" they suffered heavy casualties. Ferey's division, who had been ordered by Clausel to cover the retreat at all costs, held for nearly an hour before giving way. While he bought Clausel valuable time, Ferey was killed in the fighting. Foy's troops were the last French division to withdraw, leaving the field to the victorious Allies.

Wellington knew this was his opportunity to destroy the Army of Portugal. With a river to their rear and few effective divisions remaining, Clausel was in a dire situation. Yet the British pursuit was ineffective for a number of reasons. First, Wellington made an incorrect assumption about the direction of the French retreat. Because he thought Alba de Tormes was still held by Spanish troops, he expected the French to retreat along the road between Salamanca and Valladolid. Wellington ordered the cavalry to the left of the Allied army to close to the road. The British First Division, Light Division and part of the Fourth Division formed the infantry pursuit towards Huerta. The remainder of the Fourth Division, the Third, Sixth, and Seventh Divisions pursued the French towards Alba de Tormes, but without their cavalry in support as it had been sent north.<sup>19</sup>

Over the next day the British pursuit was disorganized and lackluster. Loss of key leaders, dispersion of units, confusion, and exhaustion all contributed to allowing the

French time to put distance between the Allies and what remained of the Army of Portugal. When Allied cavalry attempted to mount a pursuit the following morning, they found themselves waiting for the First and Light Divisions to complete their crossing of the ford at Huerta. Once across the river, two British cavalry brigades under Major General William Anson and Major General Eberhard Bock moved ahead of the Allied infantry and ran down Foy's rearguard near Garcia Hernandez.<sup>20</sup>

The action that followed relates to Wellington's use of Spanish and Portuguese forces only with respect to the fact that miscommunication, or incompetence depending on one's point of view, led to the withdrawal of the Spanish garrison at Alba without Wellington's knowledge, clearly facilitating the French escape from the field.

For his part, Carlos de España claimed that his decision to withdraw his battalion from the castle at Alba was driven out of concern for their safety given the size of the approaching French force.<sup>21</sup> Why he did not feel compelled to inform Wellington is unclear, but can likely be attributed to ambiguous nature of the command relationship between their forces. Although the brigade was formally under Carlos de España's command, accounts indicate it took its orders directly from Wellington's headquarters.<sup>22</sup> Ironically, one of the only substantive decisions de España made during the entire campaign may have cost Wellington an opportunity to destroy the Army of Portugal. This incident only solidified his poor reputation in the eyes of British officers, many of whom saw him as a man ~~whose~~ whose inertia and inability to carry out the simplest instructions amounted to a talent, even in an army where these qualities were by no means unknown."<sup>23</sup>

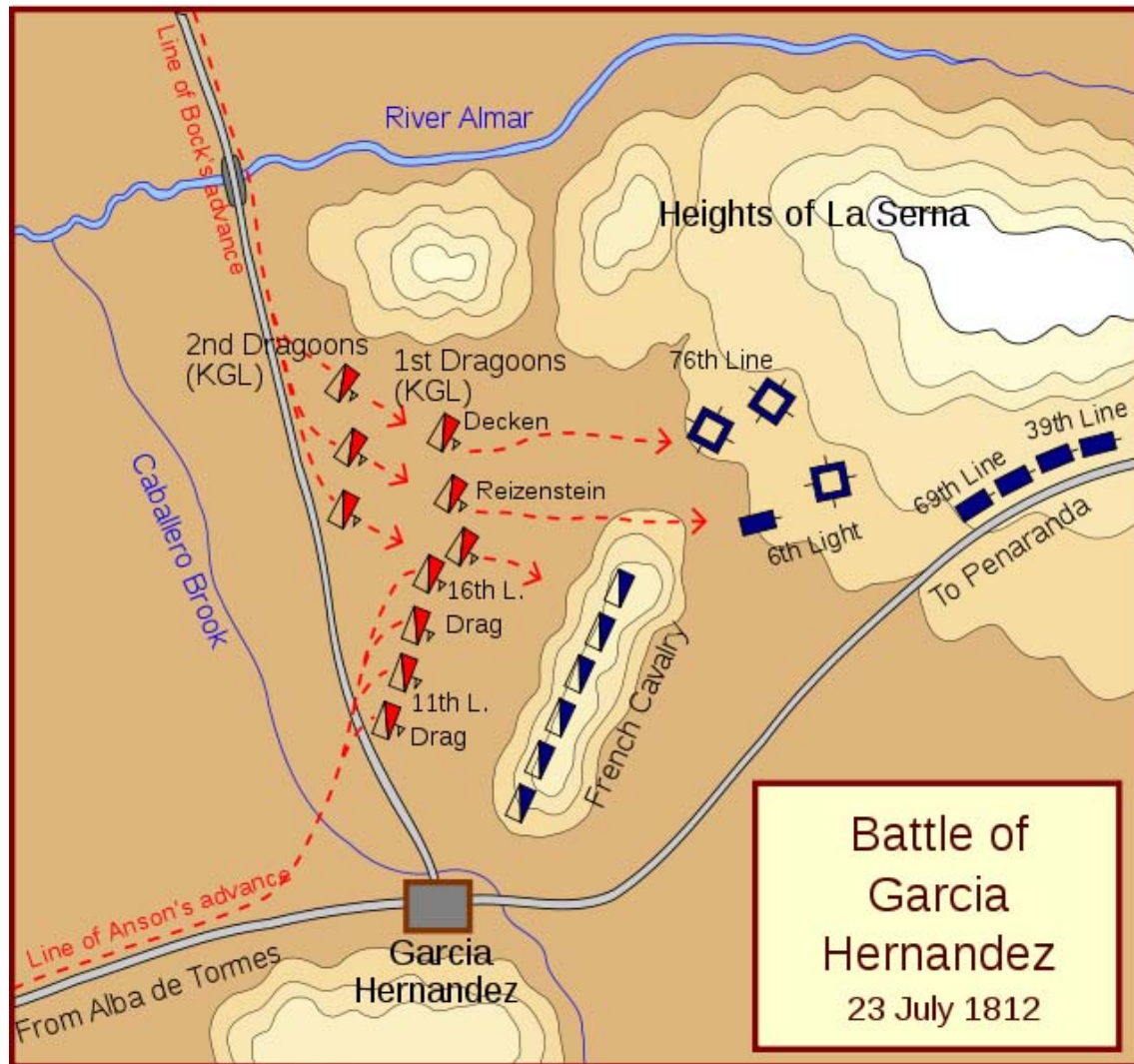


Figure 5. Garcia Hernandez

Source: Wikipedia, "Battle of Garcia Hernandez," [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle\\_of\\_Garcia\\_Hernandez](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Garcia_Hernandez) (accessed January 31, 2009).

Nevertheless, at Garcia Hernandez Allied cavalry badly mauled the 76th *Ligne* and other elements of Foy's division, which had survived Salamanca largely intact. The Allied cavalry led by the 1st and 2nd King's German Legion (KGL) Dragoons, and supported by the 11th, 12th, and 16th Light Dragoons charged the French position. As the Allies approached, French cavalry fled leaving the French infantry squares to fend for

themselves. The dragoons charged one French square that had held their fire too long. By chance, their volley killed a number of Allied horsemen, but also a mortally wounded horse carrying a dead dragoon that crashed into the square. The horse fell kicking wildly and creating a gap in the square allowing cavalry to pour in and break the square. A second square farther up the hillside was also charged. Shaken by the first square's disaster, the infantry wavered when the dragoons rode into them. Soon the men in the second square were running for their lives, except those who surrendered. Foy quickly pulled back the rest of his troops. Despite the intensity of the Allied attack, the French were still able to slip away. The French simply moved too quickly and on 25 July at Flores de Avila, Wellington rested his army and gave the infantry a chance to close the gap with the cavalry.<sup>24</sup>

Allied troop numbers and casualty figures at Salamanca offer a framework for Wellington's employment of forces throughout the campaign. British forces who bore the brunt of the fighting numbered 30,562, and suffered 3,129 casualties (388 killed, 2,667 wounded, and 74 missing). Portuguese forces (both integrated infantry and independent cavalry and infantry) numbered 18,017, and suffered 1,627 casualties (506 killed, 1,035 wounded, and 86 missing). Throughout the campaign, the Portuguese augmented British forces, secured flanks, conducted diversions, and secured captured ground and lines of communication. The Spanish numbered 3,360 men at Salamanca, and suffered only two killed and four wounded.<sup>25</sup> At this point in the war, Wellington still had no formal control of the Spaniards and very little if any confidence in their abilities. The confusion at Alba de Tormes only solidified his attitudes about their nearly total lack of tactical value.

Wellington (and his officers) generally believed Portuguese capabilities had improved throughout the campaign, specifically with respect to the cavalry. On 29 July, as the Allies sought an opportunity to engage the French, D'Urban's Portuguese brigade was integrated into the First Cavalry Division and assumed a portion of the advanced guard mission. This was an uncharacteristic decision for Wellington who normally directed Portuguese and Spanish cavalry independently, as he was reluctant to assume too much risk to his own formations given the allies inferior training, discipline, and horses. This reluctance dated back to the Talavera campaign in 1809, when Spanish cavalry covering the right of the Allied army broke early in the battle. His reconsideration of the role of Portuguese cavalry came no doubt due to the fine performance of D'Urban's brigade during this campaign.<sup>26</sup>

Unfortunately, this trend quickly reversed itself. Wellington's army marched toward Madrid with D'Urban's force as the advance guard. With him, D'Urban had his own 1st, 11th, and 12th Portuguese Dragoons, the 1st King's German Legion light infantry battalion, and six guns of MacDonald's Royal Horse Artillery troop. Just behind them was the King's German Legion heavy dragoon brigade.<sup>27</sup>

On 10 August, D'Urban maneuvered his forces cautiously near the Guadarrama River after reports confirmed that the French occupied the nearby village of Las Rosas. The next morning the advanced guard engaged French skirmishers outside the village. Two guns from MacDonald's horse artillery troop fired a few rounds while Portuguese cavalry outflanked the French and forced them to withdraw. The Portuguese cavalry brigade moved forward to Majalahonda while the remainder of the advanced guard, the 1st and 2nd Dragoons from the King's German Legion, all six guns of MacDonald's

horse artillery, and the King's German Legion light infantry battalion halted at Las Rosas. After losing contact with the French just past Majalahonda around 10:00 a.m., D'Urban ordered the Portuguese brigade back to the town. The force halted in the heat of the day.<sup>28</sup>

Given the dispersion between the advance guard and his main body, Wellington rode to Majalahonda and ordered D'Urban not to advance until the army closed. The Portuguese brigade supported by horse artillery established a strong outpost two miles in front of the King's German Legion brigade in Las Rosas. The Portuguese cavalry placed their pickets and lulled by the nature of the advance over the past days, dismounted the rest of the brigade to feed and rest the horses. Within a few hours, French cavalry advanced on the Portuguese position from Boadilla.<sup>29</sup>

The advancing French cavalry rapidly pushed back an allied patrol and pickets. D'Urban's troops barely formed line before the French arrived in front of the town. Instead of retreating, D'Urban attempted to hold the 2,000 French back with his 700 Portuguese cavalry while the Germans moved forward to support him.<sup>30</sup> D'Urban deployed one Portuguese squadron from the 11th Regiment as skirmishers while five squadrons of the 1st and 12th Regiments formed in line. The remaining squadron of the 11th, along with a detachment of dragoons formed on the left flank to cover MacDonald's four horse artillery guns. As D'Urban's troops readied to receive the attack, the French deployed into three brigade lines.<sup>31</sup>

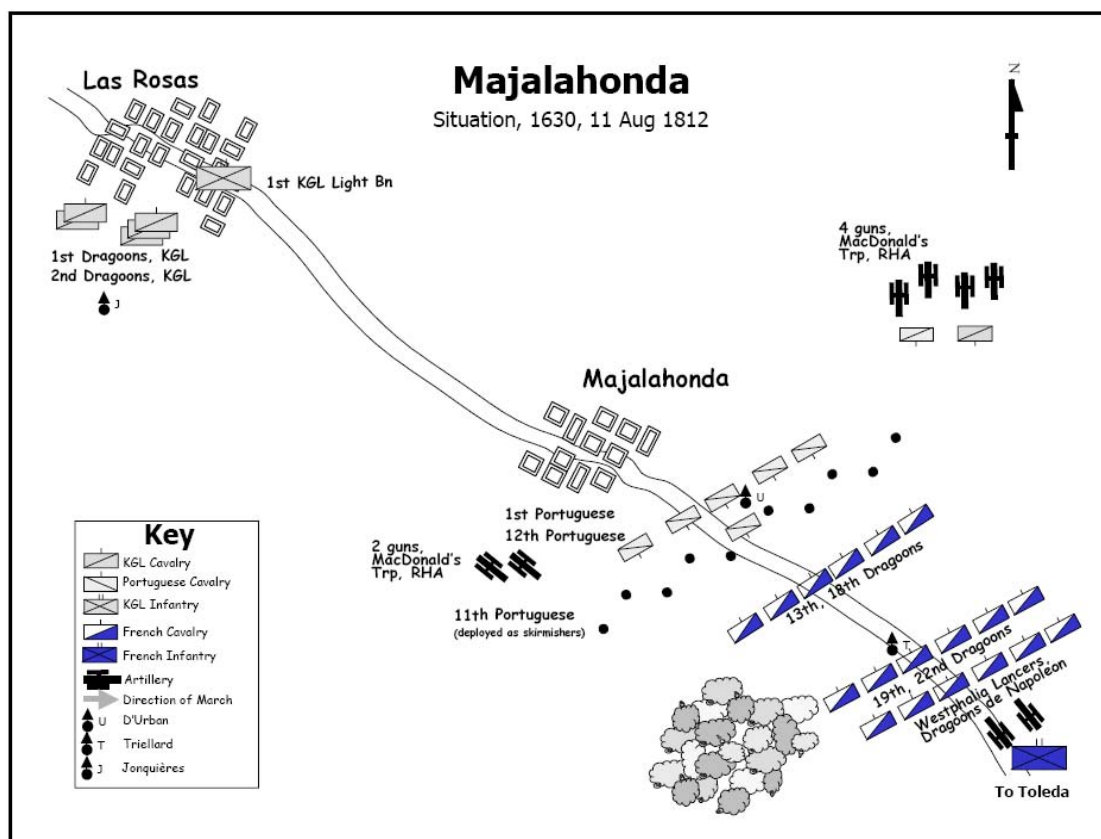


Figure 6. Majalahonda 1630, 11 August 1812

Source: Mark T. Gerges, "Command and Control in the Peninsula: The Role of the British Cavalry 1808-1814" (PhD diss., Florida State University, 2005), 307.

D'Urban thought the lead French rank was too far ahead of the main body to be supported and decided to charge with his brigade. The Portuguese cavalry charged but fled just before making contact with the French. Their officers, just ahead of the troops suddenly found themselves alone near the lead French rank. The French charged, and began to pursue the Portuguese cavalry.<sup>32</sup> Four of the German guns on the left fired five or six rounds but the French advance forced them to limber and flee to Las Rosas.<sup>33</sup> The two guns on the right, in danger of being outflanked by the French advance, were limbered and withdrawn, but were soon overtaken. Moving north, three of the four guns were lost in route to Las Rosas.<sup>34</sup> The detachment of dragoons which had accompanied

the Portuguese now found themselves as the only troops left to halt the French advance because the other squadron of the 11th Regiment also broke and fled. The French pursued the Portuguese cavalry over the two miles towards Las Rosas while the King's German Legion troops in town frantically tried to saddle their horses and form ranks. Some of the German troops quickly formed and charged the lead French ranks. This charge bought some time for the brigade to form and attempt a defense.<sup>35</sup>

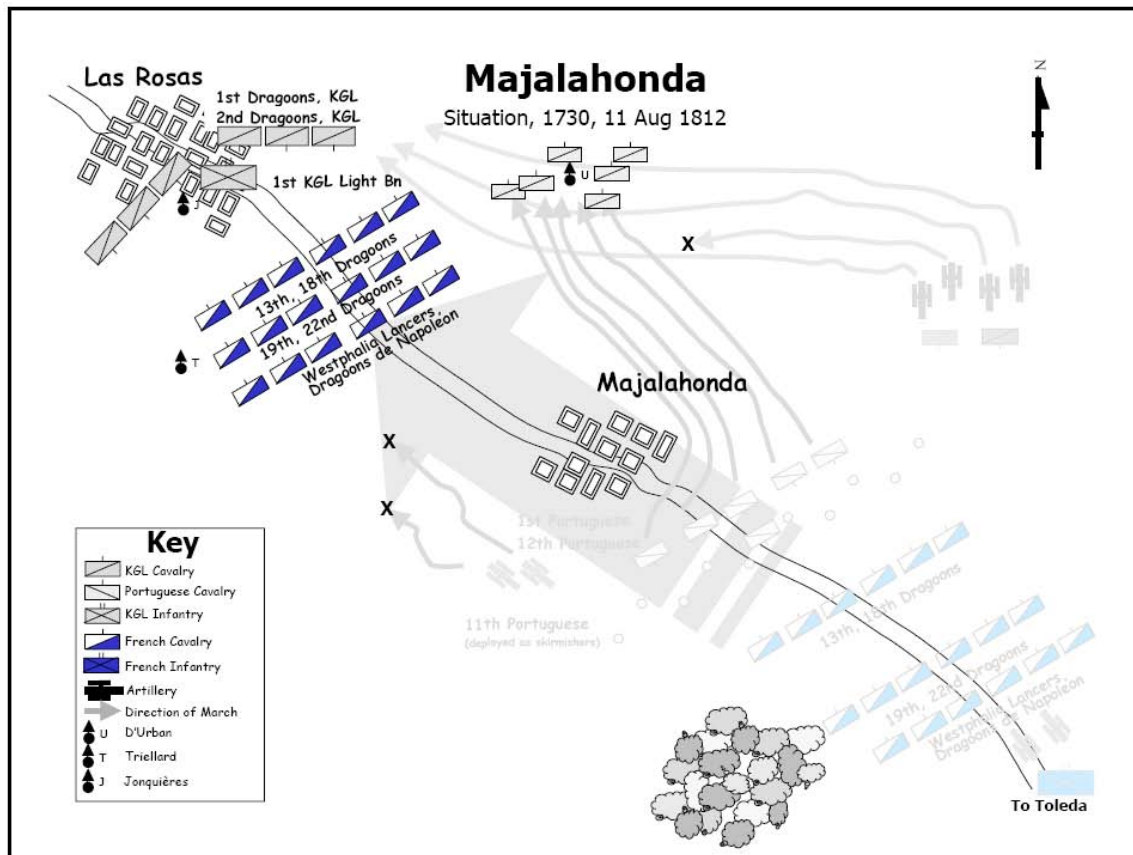


Figure 7. Majalahonda 1730, 11 August 1812

Source: Mark T. Gerges, "Command and Control in the Peninsula: The Role of the British Cavalry 1808-1814" (PhD diss., Florida State University, 2005), 309.

D'Urban tried in vain to rally his brigade but the 700 Portuguese cavalry continued to flounder. As the Germans advanced from Las Rosas and momentarily checked the French advance, the Portuguese brigade retired from the field and again left the Germans unsupported. The Germans caused the lead French brigade to reform and wait for the remainder of the division to arrive. As the French pushed the attack, lead elements of the Seventh Division from San Ildefonso came into view and compelled the French to withdraw towards Madrid.<sup>36</sup>

The performance of the Portuguese cavalry at Majalahonda was disappointing. D'Urban obviously overestimated his brigade's capabilities as had Wellington. After Majalahonda Wellington resolved not to use the Portuguese cavalry where their actions could put other Allied units in jeopardy: "I shall not place them again in situations in which, by their misconduct, they can influence the safety of the other troops."<sup>37</sup>

Wellington also believed that the French decided to attack knowing the Portuguese were in front. In fact, the most significant result of Majalahonda was to alter opinions on the use of Portuguese cavalry. Unlike the Portuguese infantry that were brigaded with British troops and performed well, the Portuguese horsemen remained in their own independent commands--under British officers but not mixed with other British units. This was due to a reputation of being poorly disciplined, but the opening phase of the Salamanca campaign had done much to change that opinion. However, Majalahonda reinforced the earlier perception.<sup>38</sup>

Wellington did not hold D'Urban personally responsible for the performance of his troops. The next day Wellington met with D'Urban. D'Urban later wrote, "If he [Wellington] blames me he abstains from shewing [sic] it. My conscience is quite clear as

a Cavalry Officer.”<sup>39</sup> Wellington now had little doubt concerning the limits Portuguese cavalry effectiveness. When Beresford, still recovering from a wound he suffered at Salamanca, wrote that maybe the Portuguese cavalry should be sent to the rear as an example, Wellington replied that:

As for sending the cavalry to the rear, that is impossible just at present. We still have a good deal upon our hands, and we are worse provided with cavalry than our neighbours [French]; and a body commanded by such a man as D’Urban, even though they will not fight, are better than none. In fact, they behaved infamously, and they must not be employed again alone, or with our cavalry, who gallop too fast for them.<sup>40</sup>

Despite the fiasco at Majalahonda, a triumphant Wellington entered Madrid on 12 August. While it was the last major success of the Salamanca campaign, the campaign itself was a pivotal event in the Peninsular War. Even if the Allied army had failed to destroy the French army after Salamanca, the campaign to date had been extraordinary in its results. For the first time since 1808 the Spanish capital had been liberated; French armies were withdrawing from large portions of Spain and a significant part of their power destroyed. Wellington’s army had performed magnificently and his personal prestige had been enhanced. He had only to consolidate his gains and drive the French out of the Peninsula once and for all.<sup>41</sup>

To that end, on 19 September the Cortes voted in a secret session to offer Wellington command over all of the Spanish armies on the Peninsula. On 22 September, after gaining approval from the Regency, the Cortes passed a decree making his appointment as Commander-in-Chief public. The Spanish government’s decision was driven in part by Wellington’s increased prestige following his victory at Salamanca; however the “monstrously tortuous document” also had undercurrents of political maneuvering through which some Spaniards undoubtedly intended to manipulate their

allies. The decree limited Wellington's powers to command of Spanish army in the field, denying him the ability to make any alteration in its internal arrangements. Further complicating matters, the verb used in the document to describe his relationship with the Spanish government, *entenderse*, had two possible interpretations: the first, simply to keep the Regency informed of his plans; the other implied that he must submit his plans for the Regency's approval. As expected, each side interpreted the agreement to best suit their own needs.<sup>42</sup>

Despite these complications, the appointment was a breakthrough for Wellington. Though his army had swelled from 20,000 troops in 1809 to its current strength of 60,000, he still relied upon Spanish armies across the Peninsula to neutralize French numerical superiority.<sup>43</sup> Although the new decree would not negate the difficulties of working with the Spanish generals, at least now he had a vehicle by which he could exert his influence in a more official capacity--and thus more formally coordinate operations amongst all Allied forces on the Peninsula.

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<sup>1</sup>Sir William Francis Patrick Napier, *History of the War in the Peninsula and the South of France, Volume IV* (London: Thomas and William Boone, 1835), 261-262.

<sup>2</sup>Wellington to Bathurst, 21 July 1812, *Wellington's Dispatches*, IX, 294-98.

<sup>3</sup>Oman, 423.

<sup>4</sup>Meyer, 205.

<sup>5</sup>*Ibid.*, 206-207.

<sup>6</sup>*Ibid.*, 209.

<sup>7</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>8</sup>Gerges, 285.

<sup>8</sup>*Ibid.*, 286.

- <sup>8</sup>Ibid., 285.
- <sup>9</sup>Ibid.
- <sup>10</sup>Ibid., 286.
- <sup>11</sup>Ibid., 288.
- <sup>12</sup>Muir, 165-166.
- <sup>13</sup>Ibid., 167.
- <sup>14</sup>Ibid.
- <sup>15</sup>Ibid.
- <sup>16</sup>Ibid., 167-168.
- <sup>17</sup>Lawford and Young, 258.
- <sup>18</sup>Oman, 459.
- <sup>19</sup>Ibid., 466.
- <sup>20</sup>Gerges, 292.
- <sup>21</sup>Lawford and Young, 194.
- <sup>22</sup>Muir, 243.
- <sup>23</sup>Lawford and Young, 103.
- <sup>24</sup>Meyer, 213.
- <sup>25</sup> Oman, 599.
- <sup>26</sup>Gerges, 301-302.
- <sup>27</sup>Ibid., 303-304.
- <sup>28</sup>D'Urban, 287-288.
- <sup>29</sup>Ibid., 288.
- <sup>30</sup>Ibid., 283.
- <sup>31</sup>Gerges, 308.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid.

<sup>33</sup>Oman, 599.

<sup>34</sup>Wellington to Bathurst, 13 August 1812, *Wellington's Dispatches*, IX, 352-5.

<sup>35</sup>Gerges, 309.

<sup>36</sup>Wellington to Bathurst, 13 August 1812, *Wellington's Dispatches*, IX, 352-5.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid.

<sup>38</sup>Gerges, 311.

<sup>39</sup>D'Urban, 288.

<sup>40</sup>Wellington to Bathurst, 13 August 1812, *Wellington's Dispatches*, IX, 352-5.

<sup>41</sup>Gerges, 314.

<sup>42</sup>Esdaile, *The Duke of Wellington*, 50-52.

<sup>43</sup>Ibid., 50.

## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSION

During the Salamanca campaign of 1812 Wellington was confronted with the challenge of employing a coalition of forces drawn from nations with different languages, dissimilar cultures, divergent political interests, and unequal military capabilities against an enemy with superior numbers. The situation bears many similarities to the challenges found in conducting coalition warfare in the modern era.

Key to Wellington's success in this campaign was his ability to employ forces in accordance with their capabilities. His British forces were by far the best trained and most capable forces, so Wellington utilized them as the nucleus of his army. Portuguese infantry incorporated into British brigades and divisions proved to be effective auxiliaries, and bolstered the number and size of reliable, effective fighting formations at his disposal.

While the infantry proved to be the most capable of Portuguese forces, the cavalry never quite measured up to the same standard. They were generally effective when used for reconnaissance and intelligence gathering. Wellington also used them effectively in diversionary attacks, and occasionally for attacks in support of allied infantry. Their disappointing performance at Majalahonda however served as a reminder that each component of the Allied force had its limitations, and that utilization of these forces was an evolving process that required continuous assessment and reassessment throughout the campaign.

The militia, or Ordenanza, while the least capable of Portuguese forces played as pivotal a role in the campaign as any other component in the Allied army. While not as

skilled as their regular counterparts, the Ordenanza was proficient enough to effectively man the lines at Torres Vedras and defend the Portuguese frontier--thereby freeing Wellington to maneuver a larger Allied force against the French than would have otherwise been available.

The fact that Wellington was in command of Portuguese forces prior to the onset of the Salamanca campaign offered him far more flexibility and responsiveness in their utilization. This was not the case with the Spanish army or guerilla forces. Wellington would not be made commander-in-chief of Spanish forces until September of 1812, and even then the Spanish Regency placed limits on his authority. The lack of any formal command relationship throughout the Salamanca campaign repeatedly left Wellington in the precarious position of attempting to convince his Spanish allies to take on missions they often had little interest in pursuing. In circumstances where they were accommodating, Wellington had little ability to influence their actions once set in motion--and therefore very little confidence in terms of what they could achieve. The fact that the Spanish army was poorly led, poorly trained, and severely lacking in discipline further exacerbated the challenge of working with them.

Despite this ineptitude, their usefulness to Wellington was in their sheer numbers and geographical dispersion. No matter how mediocre their fighting prowess, the French army could simply not turn their back on such large contingents of armed men scattered across the peninsula, and therefore the French could never effectively mass on Wellington's army.

Wellington's utilization of guerilla forces was even less formal and depended almost entirely on personal relationships developed with local commanders. The most

effective of these interactions was with Julian Sanchez and his cavalry who “oscillated” between guerilla band and regular cavalry formation (the 1st and 2nd Lanceros). Given the almost complete lack of operational control Wellington had over the guerillas, their hatred for the French and enthusiasm for killing messengers, ambushing smaller forces, and generally disrupting operations still made them an effective element to the campaign’s success. Thanks to the guerillas, French commanders at all levels were often unsure of Allied locations and disposition. Messages containing intelligence, operational orders, or requests for reinforcements had little chance of reaching their intended audience without a robust protective escort. The net effect was to slow French reaction to Wellington’s movements and delay (or deny) reinforcement to sites where he engaged French forces.

As the United States continues to engage extremists and insurgents worldwide, policy makers and military planners often encounter constraints on manpower and resources, as well as a public growing less tolerant of costs associated with extended, large-scale deployment of U.S. military force. Understanding that the U.S. cannot find solutions to all of its problems alone, Secretary of Defense Gates stated as part of the 2008 National Defense Strategy that the most important military component of the struggle against violent extremists is not the fighting we do ourselves, but how well we help prepare our partners to defend and govern themselves. Therefore, an examination of Wellington’s employment of Portuguese and Spanish forces during the Salamanca Campaign of 1812 offers several important lessons that are still applicable today.

Many of the lessons of Wellington’s 1812 Salamanca campaign with respect to coalition warfare are still applicable today. First, formalize command relationships with

coalition partners as early as possible, and seek refinement until the best possible arrangement can be reached. Second, apply forces in accordance with their capabilities, and tailor missions to mitigate the risk across the spectrum of capabilities; i.e. whenever possible, avoid placing a force with limited proficiency in a situation that will strain or overwhelm their capabilities. Finally, embedding host nation forces in “~~per~~ formations” under ~~peer~~ leadership” has proven useful to the British beyond their experience in the Peninsular War, and was used in such diverse places as India, Nepal, Oman, Egypt, and others in the 19th and 20th centuries. This may be a model worth investigating in future American endeavors. For critics who say this resembles colonialism, it is important to recognize that Portugal and Spain were never colonies of Great Britain--and such arrangements are often temporary and developmental in nature.

In conclusion, Wellington’s use of Portuguese and Spanish forces during the 1812 Salamanca campaign highlights not only the many of the classic challenges of coalition warfare but also some viable solutions. Above all, careful examination of these events underscores the need for strong, competent, learning leadership in attempting to hold a coalition effort together. If not for Wellington’s skill in employing forces across the spectrum of capability and cultivating relationships often with difficult personalities, the outcome of the campaign--not to mention the entire war--may have been quite different.

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